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"O! for Grisi's Norma!" sighed one critic. "There was a dignified woman, pure and elevated in her passion. Signora Sofi is a terma-gant in tragedy. One is too conscious of her muscles. She looks as though she might take a recreant lover by the throat."

In spite of these croakers, however, the signora's season was triumphant to the close, and brought her a golden harvest.

We have glanced upon her on her last night. A new troupe, with Signora Sancia for prima donna, took the opera house for the next week. Not having any engagement for the next fortnight, Signora Sofi remained where she was, to rest, she said. But, in fact, she was devoured by an unconquerable curiosity to see and hear the Sancia, from whom, in spite of Mr. Bertram's re-assurances, she presaged danger.

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Sitting in her private box every night, Signora Sofi watched and listened to the rival prima donna. And every night she watched and listened, her soul filled more and more with jealousy and hate. She had sense enough to see that she was eclipsed on her own ground.

"She has genius!" said the Signora, clenching her hands. "You did not tell me truth, Bertram."

"You over-rate her, Madalena," he said, softly, leaning back in the shadow of the box-curtains, as the house broke into applause, and flowers came fast in fragrant tosses.

The lady looked at her companion keenly. He had seemed indifferent to this new singer, but she distrusted him. Watching him, she had seen sometimes that he held his breath, and that his pale cheek caught a glow at Sancia's singing. Once, in a momentary silence that had followed one of her arias before the applause dared break in, she had spoken to him, and he had not heard her. Not that the Signora was deeply in love with her admirer. She was pleased with him, and proud of him. He was wealthy, generous, and a man of position and taste. He had devoted himself to her openly, moreover, and his defection would be a public mortification.

"I will go home," she said, abruptly, rising from her seat in full view of the audience, after having cast her bouquet upon the stage.

He smiled, and arose with alacrity to arrange her cloak, although the opera was not half over.

"I know that you are going to invite me to take supper with you," he whispered as he offered her his arm.

"You shall come," she said graciously.

But at the same moment, she formed a little plan in her own mind to test him. She would refuse to go to the opera the next evening, but send him, and see if he would be as indifferent to Sancia in her absence as in her presence.

"No, no—I will not let you come," she said, the next day. "I am tired and shall rest all day. Besides, I don't like 'Fra Diavolo.' It was my first opera. I am sick to sing it ever since. But you shall go, and tell me if *Zerlina* is enchanting."

Any one watching Mr. Bertram that evening could not doubt that he found the singer enchanting. Leaning over the edge of the box, he watched every look and motion, drank in every word of that fresh, tender, simple girl. His face grew bright and rapt as he listened, inly comparing her delicacy and sweetness with the artful fascinations of his superb signora.

Mr. Bertram was an enthusiast, who was always getting himself into a state of infatuation with some artiste or other; but perhaps he would have curbed himself a little, now, had he known whose black eyes were looking down on him from the gallery. In one of the front seats there sat a handsome, pale-faced young man with heavy black hair, and a luxuriant black beard, who kept a small opera-glass constantly directed towards the box in which Mr. Bertram sat.

The signora sat cursing him under her dis-

guise, seeing how far he had deceived her, and in her heart accusing him of far more than he was guilty of. There he sat while she gazed, and made, as she thought, a parade of his devotion to the new star; if, indeed, any one had leisure to notice him—for *Zerlina* drew all eyes.

The signora had taken a half-open rose from her bosom, and fastened it in Bertram's button-hole with her own fair hand, just as he was leaving her that evening; and he had vowed that it should lie under his pillow that night, for sweet dreams. She kept her eye jealously on that flower. It seemed that he would keep his word, for, gaze and applaud as he did, he threw no flower, though bouquets were showered upon the stage at every scene. But when the fifth scene came, and the pretty maiden, in turning about and admiring herself before the glass, seemed to glance towards the box whence Bertram leaned, as she sang "*Questa vita! non c'è mal*," he leaned further out, took the rose from his vest, and with one quick gesture, flung it into her lap.

Without interrupting herself, she took the flower as though it had been there before, and holding it coquettishly against her cheek, nodded at her reflection in the glass.

The action was so ready and charming, that a tempest of applause broke out again.

A pair of black eyes blazed from the gallery, and then, with some suppressed exclamation, the black-bearded man started up and left the theatre.

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The next evening the signora occupied her box at the opera house. She had had a stormy scene with Mr. Bertram, when he called in the afternoon; stormy on her side, that is—though on his, as calm as a May morning. She raved at and reproached him in Italian, French, and broken English, accusing him volubly of every falsehood and perfidy imaginable. And as she declaimed, she walked up and down the room, gesticulating like the tragic queen she was. At first, the gentleman had been surprised and confounded; then he had tried to soothe her. Presently he recovered.

"The signora exhausts herself unnecessarily," he remarked, gently, when she paused.

She stopped short in her walk, and, fixing her eyes on Mr. Bertram, suffered herself to cool. She perceived that she had lost him.

"I must applaud when every one else does," he said, impressed by her sudden change of manner, and himself losing ground as little as she gained.

She shrugged her shoulders, and gave a little laugh.

"Ah, yes, yes!" she said, turning to throw herself on a cushioned chair. "You must do as others. Do you go to-night?"

"I cannot. I have to meet some friends. May I send you some flowers?"

"Well, yes," she yawned. "Send me some fine enough for the Sancia. I promise to throw them to her."

She looked very beautiful sitting there, and the gentleman felt himself relent.

"If I can leave my friends in time, may I escort you home?" approaching to take her fair hand.

"I do not care," she said, negligently. I may not stay the time out. I am going away to-morrow."

Mr. Bertram could not hide the quick gleam of relief which these words called to his face. He was, on the whole, glad she was going. It made his retreat so much easier. But he forced himself to say some word of regret, and to repeat that he should certainly join her that evening; then he withdrew in some confusion, conscious of having betrayed himself, and half angry with himself for not being in love with the signora.

That night the opera was "*Norma*," and every seat was taken. People doubted if the Sancia were quite up to *Norma*; and one faint hope lingered in the signora's heart, as she sat alone in her box and listened. The hope slowly died, for Sancia was up to *Norma*, and

far above her rival. People could almost find it in their hearts to pity the signora for such a total eclipse. But she did not seem to care much. She appeared to be rather absent minded than otherwise, and sat with her round, white arm on the box cushion, and her eyes fixed vacantly on the stage. On the lap of her gauzy, rose-colored dress lay a superb bouquet of crimson flowers, which she held with jealous care, and which her hand trembled a little in touching.

Others had flung their flowers; and after every act, and, indeed, in almost every scene, these fragrant acts of homage had been tossed upon the stage; but these crimson roses still lay, and, it seemed, were not to adorn the Sancia's reception room next day. Suddenly the signora roused herself. A step which she knew approached the box; and the next instant Mr. Bertram stood behind her chair.

"I had to run away," he said, "but I was determined to come."

She waited a moment before turning round, for the audience had called the Sancia before the curtain, and she was at that moment standing, smiling and triumphant, just under the signora's box. One fierce glance, then the signora quickly lifted her face to speak to Mr. Bertram. The sight of his face did not soften hers. He was looking at the lovely singer with bright and ardent eyes, a smile on his lips which was tenderer than he meant or knew.

"Call my carriage," commanded the signora, haughtily.

He started, looked at her an instant with a haughty air; then bowed with a sarcastic smile, and withdrew to do her bidding. Still the crowd shouted and called, and again the prima donna made her appearance.

As she did so, the signora, after stooping a moment, rose in full sight of the house, holding a superb bouquet of crimson roses.

"My mantle for you!" she muttered, as she waved them slightly, then tossed them with a true aim directly at the gauzy draperies that fell about the Sancia.

In the color of the flowers, and the blaze of the lights, could any one see the two tiny wax tapers burning in that bouquet? Certainly not the singer, who caught them on her bosom and bowed low to the signora, while a burst of applause went up again. Only for an instant. Even in bowing, the Sancia started, gave a cry, and ran shrieking among the scenes. A little flame had caught her loose sleeve, her flowing skirts, her bosom, and flaring swiftly as lightning through the light material, the blaze wrapped her like a mantle.

"Poor child!" said the signora, pityingly, as he reached her room nearly an hour after. "She came too near de footlights. I was just risen to tell her go back ven it light. Go now, Bertram, and bring me later news. I am grieve for de Sancia."

"I tell you," some one said, excitedly, "I was in the box over the signora's, and I saw. There was a flame in the bouquet she threw. I looked down on the Sancia, and she did not touch the footlights."

"Tut! tut! you're crazy, man! Those things don't transpire out of novels. You know that they were rivals, the rest is all in your eye. Besides, where is the bouquet?"

"The signora ran upon the stage, and could have picked it up."

"Tut! tut! you taken too much wine."

Well, the Sancia never sang again, after wearing the signora's mantle.

FOREIGN ART NOTES.

The English artists have been busy finishing their works for contribution to the exhibition of the Royal Academy, which opens May 1st. The *Reader*, of April 12th, describes some of these in anticipation of the opening. The description of subjects will be of interest to our own artists.

Figure-pieces seem to take the precedence of landscapes:

Mr. Ballantyno sends a portrait of Daniel Maclise working on his great water glass picture of the Death of Nelson, accompanied by his fidus Achates, fresco Mike; also, a small composition of an Italian lad playing on a harp.

H. S. Marks, the quaint, humorous, and philosophic, still lives in the past, and surrounds it with a tender human interest. "My Lady's Page in Disgrace" reveals a gentle boy in gentle garb sitting with rueful visage in the stocks, and the steward has brought the chaplain of the great house to lecture the already repentant lad on the heinousness of his transgression. The gardener in the distance would fain crack a joke at his expense; but the heart of the maid whom he addresses is with the disgraced boy; and she hopes, as we do, that he will soon be reinstated in my lady's favor. The other represents a bumpkin who has come with his affianced bride—a nice, piquant-looking lass—to the Notary's office for the necessary law documents. The Notary, evidently an old bachelor, is mending his pen, and looks up with a stern pouting of the lip to the bridegroom, as much as to say, "And you're another of them, are you?" The color in the latter is forcible and good.

Mr. Thomas Faed will be represented by a single picture of no great dimensions, and of but limited interest as to subject; but so powerfully is it painted that he has succeeded in raising a commonplace genre episode of two little country girls feeding poultry into the realm of high art. The work will be much admired. Mr. Pettie sends a group of villagers attending a poor demented old woman to the stake for witchcraft. It is rather sketchy, but for all that intensely dramatic, and the figures are individualized with the hand of a master.

M. Henri de Coene, a Belgian *genre* painter of some note, the son of an equally celebrated artist, died a few weeks ago at Brussels, aged sixty-seven. M. de Coene was one of the oldest professors attached to the Academy of Fine Arts of that city.

MUSICAL GOSSIP.

Ella's Record of musical events for 1865, which reflects that enthusiastic director of the *Musical Union's* peculiar ideas upon such topics, contains a pleasant gossiping paper about music in Paris, wherein he depicts a roseate ideal of that gay capital viewed as the *rendezvous* for art and those who profess it, laying especial color upon the social position there granted musicians and the ready access of merit to honor. The London Reader, commenting on Ella's brochure, says, after confessing Paris to be the principal center of action in all that concerns the diffusion of art, pungently remarks, "Paris creates little enough in music, but produces more than any other place, and this advantage is derived mainly from the French habit of organization. After elaborate discussion of the Parisian and London systems of concert and opera giving, that writer proceeds to criticise J. Ella's first concert this season, made under great difficulties, since Joachim, and Mme. Schumann, and Webb could not be availed of.

M. Diemar, a Parisian virtuoso, well reported, is also commended, except for his touch on the piano-forte, which is too hard and metallic.

The writer confesses, however, to have been completely enthralled by Piatti's wondrous cello, and was so fascinated that he forgot, at times, both violin and piano. He considers Ella's 22d season to have opened worthily, and St. James' Hall when half filled as then, is a charming place for a concert; plenty of room, air, ease, and comfort.

Camille Urso is reported as making a sensation in Paris, having played at Le Louvre before a distinguished audience, and in Le Conservatoire with Pasdeloup's orchestra.

Clapson, the French composer, who died re-

cently, left a spinnet of the sixteenth century, which has keys of agate and lapis lazuli, while the ivory frame-work is covered with 25,000 precious stones set in silver, making its reputed value at least 60,000 francs, or \$12,000 gold.

Louis Napoleon has appointed Victor Masse professor of composition, and Savard professor of harmony, vice Leborne and Clapisson deceased.

There are conflicting reports about L'Academie lease under Louis Napoleon's decree, which divorced it from La France and state direction. One account says many well endowed parties are competing for its lease and Roqueplan is preferred by Louis to all competitors. Another *on dit* is that Perrin, who acted under government in directing it, within a few hours after *Le Moniteur* contained that decree, signed a lease of L'Academie, deposited ample security for its fulfillment, and went to his Italian villa—reported as magnificent—to have a good *dolce farniente* before entering upon it. This latter story is flatly contradicted by some gossips, who aver that Perrin is hated by all parties inside or outside that opera house, and in no event can he obtain further control of its direction. As usual, with Frenchmen in doubtful cases, they shrug their shoulders and cry "*nous verrons*," i. e., we shall see.

Flotow was, by last report, quite busy at Le Lyrique, in rehearsing his "Zilda," which he trusts will astonish Paris considerably more than "Faust" or "Mirelle."

Morensi, the pet of all these northern United States, came before a Covent Garden Opera audience, flushed with her triumphs and regal honors at Copenhagen, but found that vast theater worse—if possible—than New York's Academy to produce full, free, and pure tone in, and the snobbish, Italian-loving public severely cold toward a Yankee girl. She conquered them, however, before Acuzena's rôle was completed, and their rigid recutation changed to enthusiastic applause, when she proved herself equal to any contralto London has known in an Italian opera for years past. London critics will probably discover in her case as they did, with or affected to do with, Bosio, Patti, Chas. Adams, Foley, and many others that either Italy or England gave them birth, not America.

The London *Athenæum* is remarkably cordial in praise of that very young yet thoroughly prepared artist, Mlle. Orgeni, who made a *debut* in Gye's opera, taking Violetta, "La Traviata," on April 7th, its opening night. After pronouncing condemnation upon that opera, the critic proceeds: "A more satisfactory first appearance we do not recollect on our stage. Mlle. Orgeni has an elegance of appearance, behavior, and costume, which speaks for itself as to the nature of this new candidate. Her voice is not a rich one, but it is a real *soprano*, some two octaves if not more in compass. Further, she can sing and phrase, she was never idle, never attentive to the stalls, never, in brief, out of her part. Her management of breath is good, her executive fluency is great; she has a capital shake, and now a shake goes for something. As an actress she evinces real feeling. Her by-play is excellent, subtle without disturbance of her comrades; and going as far as to justify the real impossibilities of such a stage character as any by-play can go. Her expression could not have been better or more delicately given." This from Chorley is a settler for those who in Berlin pretended to ignore Orgeni's claims to rank with *prime donne* and only petted there because Viardot-Garcia taught her. Fancelli, the new tenor who appeared with her at Covent Garden, is regarded by Chorley as promising, with a fairly good voice, which he delivers without trick or crudity; but his part, Alfredo, is not one which qualifies a hearer to judge of a singer. His success, he admits, however, was for the moment, greater than hers; but he must be heard in some better musical drama, ere any one can offer an opinion of his real value, concludes that critic.

Chorley sneers at Gye's announcement of Mlle. Von Edelsberg and Mlle. Sonier, in characters once filled by Mesdames Viardot and Castellan,

thus: "No opera bears starvation worse than 'Le Prophete,' and such a cast is not to be recorded without our recollecting the poet's line, 'Bare, ruined choirs, where once the sweet birds sung.'" He is quite gracious toward Morensi and this country, when he says: "The *Times* speaks well of the new Azucena, Mlle. Morensi, a new recruit from America, which Land of Promise bids fair to furnish its contingent of artists to our theaters and opera houses." Bravo for that confession, giving America credit for Morensi, when Gye and others had given her a new birth-place in Hamlet's land. He defers notice of Tom Holher's *debut* at Mapleson's in "I Puritani" until some days hence, as if doubtful about one who has been talked about, he says, for a year past by all and sundry amateurs. Di mar, the French pianist, did not please him, as, in common with all French trained artists, even at Le Conservatoire, he lacks depth of feeling and breadth of style for such music as Beethoven's trio in D major, as that famed orchestra displays admirable mechanical execution, but the interpretation is too forced and finical. Neither does he like Herr Auer, the violinist at Ella's first concert, so he winds up sharply, "Mr. Ella must be aware that he courts the strictest criticism by his perpetual self-laudation and high prices of admission. Tuesday's concert was of average quality, nothing more. He liked A. S. Sullivan's new Symphony, and declares its performance by the Musical Society and its third movement would have been encored but for its late arrival. A. Mellon and his splendid band are praised highly for their share in that performance.

Benedict's oratorio, "St. Peter," will not be performed at this year's festival, but a serious composition less important, Molique's farewell concert at London on 30th ult., seems to have engaged universal journalistic and professional sympathy.

Pauer, of London, has been decorated as Court Musician by Austria's grand Emperor.

Two more pianists have arrived in London, all ready for mortal strife in pursuit of guineas. They are called Anna Mehlig and Herr Silber-schmidt.

Four new Italian operas are forthcoming, fathered by Marchi, Albini, Ruggi, and Perschini!

The concert at Florence to aid the movement to Guido d'Arezzo had moderate success only.

Pacini's Dante Symphony, Mercadante's Hymn to Rossini, with other modern and inappropriate music were given to a small audience.

Bazzini is reported as successful with his 51st Psalm in that city.

Theodore Labarre has written a mass for the Annunciation Festival at Notre Dame, Paris.

Prince Polignac's song, "The Swallow," one of three which obtained prizes last year in Paris, now appears with English words by Novello.

Count de Reiset has written another opera in three acts called "Dona Maria."

Mme. Barbot is engaged at Madrid, during her recess from Russian enthusiasm, to match Tamberlik in grand opera.

We regret to hear that Zucchi and Bellini are likely to remain in Europe next season, and Max's agent to discover new artists must work sharp to find new substitutes for them. Mme. Zucchi recovered sufficiently from her severe throat affection to embark last week for Europe, and Bellini has left for a brief season at Chicago with the Ghioni, Susini, and Max Strakosch company.

The loss of Master Coker has been replaced by Master Theodore J. Toedt, brother of the celebrated Miss Toedt, violinist. We recently heard this wonderful boy soprano who has been engaged for Dr. Cutler's Festival at Irving Hall on May 15, and found a marvellous soprano in that boy of thirteen years, coupled with the intelligence and taste which signalizes that family.

We hear of great revolutions in church music here, both in the organ and choral department, and in some instances more than one church is determined to possess the same musical treasure at the same time. High offers have been made for singers that are highly estimated, and even contraltos have been entreated to accept seven hundred dollars per annum for their services.